

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
January 8, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on January 8, 2024 in regular session in Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Jeffrey S. Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Jeff Phillips; Clerk-Treasurer Shelby Keys; Council Members Russ Overton, Kevin Arnold, Noelle Weishaar, Jeff Rayburn, Ernest Watson, Jr; City Attorney Todd Sammons; Building Commissioner Josh Davis, Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Cemetery Caretaker Tony Baltes, Fire Chief Kenny Haun, Police Chief Matt Anderson, Utility Office Manager Heather Smart, Electric Supt. Brett Wilhite, Street/Water/Sewer/Sanitation Supt. Bryce Black, Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge and Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge

Also in attendance were: Bob Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures, Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican, Randy Denton, Josh Eldridge, Cody Heldak, Hannah Madson, Caleb DeJong, Stace Pickering and Garrett Welker.

The minutes of the December 26, 2023 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Overton, second by Watson, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: There were none.

2024 Council President: Arnold said it's necessary to reorganize and nominate a new council president. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to nominate Weishaar as President of the council. The motion passed unanimously.

Swearing In of Superintendents: Phillips swore in the superintendents.

Ordinance 01-2024, Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Davis said this ordinance is coming back from the Plan Commission with a favorable recommendation. Section 2, subsection 12 was removed. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 02-2024, Rezone St. Joseph's College: Davis said this would rezone a 15 acre parcel that St. Joe owns adjacent to the campus from residential suburban to single family residential. This allows it to be subdivided into much smaller lot sizes. Watson recused himself from the discussion. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Weishaar, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed by majority, with Watson abstaining.

Ordinance 03-2024, Rezone Busy Bee: Davis said this would rezone Busy Bee from R1 to B1, as the business in the current location is changing. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Arnold, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 01-2024, January Gas Tracker: C. Lockridge stated the gas tracker reflects a 5¢ increase per 100 cubic feet. There was a motion by Overton, second by Rayburn, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Burial Rights Request: Keys read a request for burial rights for Paul and Denise Hartwell. There is a motion by Weishaar, second by Rayburn, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Relations Request: Keys requested up to \$100.00 from the public relations fund for an employee's retirement. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Rayburn, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

FMLA Request: Keys said there was an FMLA request. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Utility Budgets: Progress on establishing utility budgets is continuing.

Front Street Property: A court date is set for January 12th.

Alley and ROW Ordinance: Davis said there is no ordinance that specifies the use of unimproved alleys and right-of-ways. He would like to form a committee. Arnold, Anderson and Davis will be on the committee.

Administrative Comments:

Phillips said he needs council's permission to appoint him to the KIRPC board. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously. He also said he appointed Watson and Rayburn to the Board of Public Works.

Weishaar welcomed Phillips and congratulated the superintendents. She thanked the Electric Dept. for the Christmas lights.

Arnold said he is excited for what the future holds and reminded everyone to always be forward thinking and keeping in mind who the next person up is for each department.

Overton said welcome.

Keys said all elected officials have signed the annual nepotism policies.

Watson said if you need something, ask the mayor.

Rayburn said he was impressed with Anderson's end of the year report and the amount of training the officers complete annually.

Claims Approval: The claims were presented to council for approval. There was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar, to approve the claims. The motion passed unanimously.

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson said written and physical testing has been completed. The next step is staff interviews, then BOPW interviews.

Law Dept: Sammons said it's good to be back.

Utility Office: Smart said she is working on year-end reports, utility budgets and the AMI project.

Building Dept: Davis said there is an open position in the building dept.

Fire Dept: Haun said he emailed council a year-end report. He is getting fire tools recertified.

Electric Dept: Wilhite said they are taking down the Christmas lights, working on installing lights in Foundation Park and getting power to the park's building there.

Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black said there are two positions open within the Street Dept. He asked council's permission to get quotes on a shoring box for working in holes. There was a motion by Watson, second by Rayburn, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

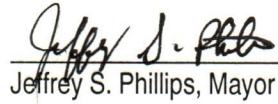
Project Coordinator: J. Lockridge said a request for qualifications for the brick streets project has been posted. A committee will need to be set up to review.

Cemetery Dept: Baltes had nothing.

Gas Dept: C. Lockridge had nothing.

Park Dept: Effinger said the Park Board & Corp will be meeting tomorrow at Iroquois Park.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.


Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:


Shelby E. Keys, Clerk-Treasurer